

A World Of Second Bests

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

According to religious tradition, God created the human being and settled him in paradise. But after some time, man committed a grave error and was sent down to earth.

In the beginning, God wanted to settle the whole of the human race in paradise, but after we sinned, God changed His plan. Thereafter, only selected individuals would be allowed to enter paradise. According to this story of creation, we lost our initial advantage and since then only the second best has been available to us. This story shows us the right direction for our lives.

The human being is an idealistic creature by birth. Everyone tries to find his ideal goal, one that is the very best for him. But it is a fact that no one succeeds in doing so. If this is the case, what should we do? The only course open for all men and women is to accept the second best as the only available choice. This is the only way to have a tension-free life in this world.

If you are not ready to accept the second best and you would prefer to keep straining for the ideal, the result could well turn out to be disastrous. For example, a certain lady, who was working in a multinational company, failed to get promoted for some reason. She fell into a state of deep frustration and ultimately committed suicide. There are many such cases of people failing to find what they think is optimal, and then they become deeply depressed.

This kind of depression is due perhaps to a lack of awareness of the law of nature. If the lady in question, for instance, had been aware that according to the law of nature, only the second best was attainable for her and that she (or others like her) had already achieved

that, the realisation would have given her contentment and a tension-free life. This principle applies not only to individuals but also to nations.

The best formula of life is: Try, try by all means to achieve the very best, but when you feel that you can only get the second best then accept it gracefully. Because if you remain in denial, and try to achieve the acme of perfection, that will only land you in a worse predicament.

The same applies to nations. This is a competitive world and this could be a formidable obstacle to everyone getting the very best in life. In such a situation, the only safe option is to accept the second best. When you

try to have the very best, then you are compelled to engage in continuous confrontation. The only risk-free option is to accept the second best. So be a realist. If you try to get the very best, it means your approach is unrealistic, but if you accept the second best, it means that you have opted for a realistic approach. And in this world of competition only a realistic approach can save you from disaster.

In short, the very best might be unachievable, while the second best is always within your reach. It is a fact that everyone is an idealist by birth, but you have to rein in your idealism and be content with the second best. As a matter of practicality, there is no other option for you in this world.

This is the story of our lives: We tend to lose whatever is second best on account of just one reason, and that is, our futile pursuit of the very best.



**THE
■ SPEAKING ■
TREE**